

**Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format for Actions Other Than Hazardous Fuels  
and Fire Rehabilitation Actions**

*Stellar Adventures*  
**DOI-BLM-AZ-P010-2011-039-CX**

**A. Background**

BLM Office: *Hassayampa Field Office (HFO)*

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: **AZA 31778**

Proposed Action Title/Type: **OHV guiding and Shooting Experiences**

Location of Proposed Action: **Table Mesa Recreation Area**

Description of Proposed Action: Guided ATV, Hummer, and Blazer tours to explore resources within the Table Mesa Recreation area. Operates year round with an average of one to three tours per week with two to four people; tours average about 1.5 hours. Sites visited include the Agua Fria Indian fort, stagecoach site, and teaching basic shooting skill from a NRA Certified Range Safety Officer. All shooting equipment will be supplied for a safe and educational shooting activity at agreed upon sites by the BLM. The shooting experience begins with an in-depth firearm safety debriefing. Each shooter will fire a full 17 Round Magazine from Glock 9MM Handgun. Each shooter will fire one 30 round magazine from the AK-47 semi-automatic assault rifle. The shooting experience can be added to any tour. Targets provided and suited for all skill levels. Motorized guiding will take place on 25-30 miles of rugged desert terrain. Participants must be 12 years old or older to ride ATVs. Blazer M1009 will hold 10 guests. Night tours are also available. Stargazing is conducted by a professional astronomer, with the help of telescopes. Guests will also experience night vision which will enhance their chances of seeing wildlife as species come alive in the darkness of the desert sky. Operates year round on existing numbered roads. Subcontracting may be necessary to operate with larger groups. Guides are certified in CPR and first aid, cell phones and radios are used in emergencies. Bottled water and grilled food is offered for participants during lunch, dinner, and /or snacks. Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace principles are practiced. ATV rentals are also available.

**B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

Land Use Plan (LUP) Name: **Bradshaw-Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan**

Date Approved/Amended: **4/1/2010**

☒ The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): RR-30 Special Recreation Permits are authorized on a case by case basis for all recreation activities meeting the requirements in 43 CFR 2930 and applicable manuals, policies, and guidance.

☐ The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions):

Explain specific or implied decision(s): Specific decisions include: issuance of recreation permits are at the discretion of the office manager issuing the permit. The decision is based on potential resource impacts, conflicts with other users, health and safety concerns, past or present performance with BLM or other agencies, and BLM's ability to timely process the application and effectively administer the permit.

**C: Compliance with NEPA:**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 Departmental Manual (DM) 11.9, Actions for Categorical Exclusion H Recreation Management:

Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan. Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 11.9 apply.

I considered: The report from Johnson Valley. There is, as always an element of risk which requires insurance coverage and the categories of risks are identified in the SRP handbook. The permittee is required to keep insurance up to date and the letter of authorization is void if insurance coverage is cancelled, altered to a lesser coverage, or expired.

**D: Signature**

**Review:** *We have determined that the proposal is in accordance with the categorical exclusion criteria and that it would not involve any significant environmental effects (see Attachment 1). Therefore, it is categorically excluded from further environmental review.*

**Prepared by:** \_\_\_\_\_/S/\_\_\_\_\_

**Mary Skordinsky  
Project Lead**

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_/S/\_\_\_\_\_

**Leah Baker  
Planning & Environmental Coordinator**

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_/S/\_\_\_\_\_

**D. Remington Hawes  
Field Manager**

**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

**Mary Skordinsky, [mskordin@blm.gov](mailto:mskordin@blm.gov)**

**Note:** A separate decision document must be prepared for the action covered by the CX.

BLM Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances<sup>1</sup>  
Attachment 1

The action has been reviewed to determine if any of the extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) apply. The project would:		
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety		
<b>Yes</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> Touring company employs certified leaders to lead the recreation experience. Shooting areas have been identified through BLM recommendations which should reduce stray bullets; however, it is not a guarantee. BLM policy indicates that shooting and other recreation activities can co-exist on BLM administered areas. The volume of shooting by this SRP regulated activity is minimal when compared to the fifth largest city attracting shooters to this popular recreation area. It is not the SRP activity alone, but that of a metropolitan area of shooters shooting in this area that will add to the amount of lead left behind. Lead moves slowly and previous research that lead to the production of the Table Mesa Recreation and Travel Management Plan/EA (June 2010) indicated there was concern for pollution of Lake Pleasant reservoir which is used as a water supply to Phoenix and Anthem; but the amount of migration of lead, a heavy element, would not affect/contaminate this water source.
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness or wilderness study areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds (Executive Order 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas?		
<b>Yes</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> Use will occur on the numbered roads and trails. Guided activities will share Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace skills and ethics with their clients.
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)]?		
<b>Yes</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> OHV activities and shooting have been identified in the RMP as legitimate for this area. Participants will learn about OHV regulation on BLM lands and safe shooting practices.
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?		
<b>Yes</b>  <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> There are no known highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. Motorized activity is restricted to numbered roads and trails. Shooting has been identified to specific areas thus minimizing safety concerns. Lead migration to Lake Pleasant

<sup>1</sup> If an action has any of these impacts, you must conduct NEPA analysis.

		Reservoir has been determined not to be an issue because the migration rate is slow (June 2010).
5. Establish a precedent for future action, or represent a decision in principle about future actions, with potentially significant environmental effects?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> There are no precedent setting significant environmental effects associated with this permit.
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> This permit has been issued since 2001 without any of the effects listed. Shooting has been added to this permit. It has been determined through previous research that lead migration from shooting is slow and will not impact Lake Pleasant, which is the drinking source for Phoenix and Anthem (June 2010).
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the Bureau or office?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> This permit has been issued since 2001 without any impacts regarding impacts listed above.
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> There are no endangered or threatened species in the area. The Sonoran Desert Tortoise is a candidate ESA species. Tortoises are sometimes on the roads and they should be avoided.
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> There are no areas identified that violate the protection of the environment.
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> This permit does not adversely affect low income or minority populations.
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners, or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007)?		
<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Rationale:</b> There are no known sacred sites along the identified routes.
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area, or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112)?		
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Rationale:</b> Vehicles will stay on numbered routes. There is no off-

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	road motorized use.
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## Decision

**Project Description:** Guided ATV, Hummer, and Blazer tours to explore resources within the Table Mesa Recreation area. Operates year round with an average of one to three tours per week with two to four people; tours average about 1.5 hours. Sites visited include the Agua Fria Indian fort, stagecoach site, and teaching basic shooting skill from a NRA Certified Range Safety Officer. All shooting equipment will be supplied for a safe and educational shooting activity at agreed upon sites by the BLM. The shooting experience begins with an in-depth firearm safety debriefing. Each shooter will fire a full 17 Round Magazine from Glock 9MM Handgun. Each shooter will fire one 30 round magazine from the AK-47 semi-automatic assault rifle. The shooting experience can be added to any tour. Targets provided and suited for all skill levels. Motorized guiding will take place on 25-30 miles of rugged desert terrain. Participants must be 12 years old or older to ride ATVs. Blazer M1009 will hold 10 guests. Night tours are also available. Stargazing is conducted by a professional astronomer, with the help of telescopes. Guests will also experience night vision which will enhance their chances of seeing wildlife as species come alive in the darkness of the desert sky. Operates year round on existing numbered roads. Subcontracting may be necessary to operate with larger groups. Guides are certified in CPR and first aid, cell phones and radios are used in emergencies. Bottled water and grilled food is offered for participants during lunch, dinner, and /or snacks. Tread Lightly! and Leave No Trace principles are practiced. ATV rentals are also available.

**Decision:** Based on a review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the action as proposed, with the following stipulations (if applicable).

The decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. Public notification of this decision will be considered to have occurred on December 22, 2010. Within 30 days of this decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at 21605 North 7th Avenue, Phoenix Arizona, 85027. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

**Approved By:** \_\_\_\_\_/S/\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_12/14/2012\_

**D. Remington Hawes**

**Field Manager**